



CITY OF CONCORD

NEW HAMPSHIRE

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

Minutes

November 7, 2008

7:30 A.M.

The meeting convened at 7:35 A.M. in the City Council Chambers, 37 Green Street, Concord. Coffee and refreshments were served compliments of Chris Carley.

PRESENT: Allen Bennett, Tim Bernier, Doug Black, Chris Carley, Mark Coen, Peter Cook, David Feller, Larry Gloekler, John Hoyt, Jan McClure, Bill Norton, Dan St. Hilaire, Claudia Walker, and Stephen Heavener

ABSENT: Byron Champlin

STAFF: Carlos Baía, Deputy City Manager - Development
Matthew Walsh, Asst. for Special Projects
Bev Rafferty, Administrative Assistant

GUESTS: Chip Chesley, General Services Director
Bob McManus, Business Manager, General Services Department

I. MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 10TH EDAC MEETING AND OCTOBER 17TH REGULATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING

Tim Bernier made a motion to accept the minutes; seconded by Allen Bennett; motion passed unanimously.

II. SOLID WASTE/RECYCLING CHALLENGES

Chip Chesley, General Services Director, thanked EDAC for giving him and Mr. McManus some time to talk about solid waste. Mr. Chesley provided a PowerPoint slide show presentation (see copy attached).

Mr. Chesley reviewed Fiscal Year 2009 budget service impacts. He noted that the solid waste budget is a special revenue budget and \$1.9M comes from property taxes which is half of the total expenses.

Mr. Chesley gave a brief history of the solid waste program. The Concord Co-op was formed with 27 communities to develop and operate a waste-to-energy facility. The energy generated serves 18,000 homes and local municipalities are obligated to purchase that power at a higher than market rate. Mr. Chesley reviewed the contract history with Wheelabrator.

The burning of yard waste was discussed and Mr. Chesley noted that the State law was clarified and next year the city will not be allowed to burn yard waste. In the Spring the city burns and in the Fall they compost. Citizens can put out 5 bags per week to the curb. Only bagged material is burned in the Spring or composted in the Fall. All other yard waste brought to the curb is burned.

Mr. Chesley noted the FY 2010 budget is up 23% and the FY 2011 is up 16% and that is because of contract renegotiations. He continued there is 18,000 tons of residential trash in Concord and 40,000 tons in commercial trash.

Mark Coen asked if nothing is done and there is a cost increase, what would the cost to the tax payer be per year. Mr. Chesley noted there are 17,000 dwelling units in Concord and 9,000 are rental. Apartment houses with 7 units or under the city picks up the trash; if there are 8 units or more, a dumpster is used but the city does not bill as it is a residential property. Mr. Chesley continued there are two options: (1) expense or service reduction or (2) increase revenue. He reviewed eliminating yard waste but provide a place for people to take it; eliminating container collection and disposal and residents could hire a contractor to take it to the transfer station; and eliminate municipal solid waste collection and disposal. Mr. Chesley commented that eliminating yard waste alone is not much of a savings.

Mr. Chesley noted if the city got out of the apartment/condo business, so to speak, and eliminated the container collection, there would be more savings and he continued that curbside recycling is still not much of a savings. Elimination of municipal solid waste collection and disposal was also discussed. The issue of recycling vs. truck pick up was mentioned and it was noted there is an incentive to provide both commodities; recycling and curbside pickup. Recycling is a public good but it is not saving the city any money.

Tim Bernier noted eliminating municipal solid waste would be a savings to the city but it comes out of the residential checkbook. Members noted that increasing revenue means increasing property taxes.

A user fee pay-as-you-throw program was discussed. The cost would be approximately \$150/yr. per average household to support transportation and new concept of weekly curbside recycling. If property tax is the primary source, the average household would see \$40/yr. increase to continue with the current system of weekly trash pick-up and bi-weekly recycling.

Carlos Baía noted that with constraints such as a possible tax cap, if the city increase the tax rate because of solid waste, are other services going to be cut; i.e. Fire and Police. Or, if no tax cap, are people willing to pay significantly more in property taxes for all city services to maintain solid waste disposal as is?

Mark Coen inquired as to the bag size and Mr. Chesley responded 33 gallons/20 pounds.

Peter Cook asked if residents can separate recyclables. Is the co-op looking at single stream recycling? Single stream recycling would be in place for all residents with the new co-op recycling facility.

Mr. Chesley noted that if the pay-as-you-throw program is incorporated, there will still be an impact on the General Fund for solid waste although it should remain fixed.

Mr. Chesley noted residents can buy a sleeve of 15 bags if they want waste picked up. Bulky items such as mattresses are not to be picked up at the curbside. Mr. McManus noted there is a \$25 pick-up fee for white items.

Mr. McManus continued that there is a subsidy coming from the commercial sector to the residential sector; the Mall pays a proportional share; the pay-as-you-throw program could cost more money. Apartment buildings, depending on number of units, have a dumpster based on volume.

There was detailed discussion on single stream recycling, bulky items could use a sticker system or keep the current system, residents would still need to call to let General Services know those items were there; number of bags and more. Mr. Chesley noted the average is 1.6 bags per household per week.

Chairperson Carley inquired if the city goes to the pay-as-you-throw program, would the subsidy from commercial users still be there so the property tax does not increase? Mr. Chesley noted all would be going to the pay-as-you-throw program. Mr. McManus commented the entire trash collection could be paid for around \$2/bag for solid waste collection and disposal.

The discussion then went further regarding yard waste. Mr. Chesley noted they collect yard waste for six weeks in the Spring, every other week in the Summer, and then six weeks again in the Fall. There would be no charge for recycling in the pay-as-you-throw program so there is an incentive to take recyclables out of the trash. There would be no pay-as-you-throw for yard waste.

Dr. Black inquired if there was any revenue from recycling and Mr. Chesley noted revenue comes to the vendor and that is reflective in the rate they charge the city. Members asked if there were other communities in New Hampshire as large as Concord that use a pay-as-you-throw or recycling program and Mr. Chesley noted Dover is similar to Concord. Dover has made a remarkable increase in its recycling. He continued that change is the challenge and that 7,000 communities in the nation a pay-as-you-throw system. He noted that plastic items would not be picked up.

Mark Coen noted looking at this economically, the pay-as-you-throw may be a tough sell. The pay-as-you-throw is a different level of service.

At this point, Chairperson Carley noted EDAC should spend more time on this at the next meeting as the City Council will be asking for input on this matter. Mr. Chesley was asked to provide a slide that enumerates the additional service with the pay-as-you-throw program vs. what is currently in place. It was noted the City Council will take this matter up after the new year begins.

Bill Norton noted that the downtown district would not change, they will keep paying as now.

Tim Bernier inquired if the city raises taxes, would the commercial subsidy continue as well as the General Fund contribution and Mr. Chesley noted they would cap the General Fund contribution.

(At 8:50 A.M., Mr. Heavener, Mr. Feller, and Dr. Black left the meeting.)

Due to the time, agenda items III through VI were not heard.

VII. MEETING CALENDAR AND HOSTING OPPORTUNITIES FOR 2009

Carlos Baía noted the schedule for 2009 meetings enclosed in the agenda package and asked members to please sign up to host a meeting.

VIII. OTHER BUSINESS

The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, December 5, 2008. It will be hosted by Jan McClure and will be held at The Nature Conservancy.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business and upon a motion duly made and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 9:00 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Beverly A. Rafferty
Administrative Assistant